Meeting of Senate
Minutes
Monday, 26 February 2018

1400, Reception Room, Wills Memorial Building

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (Chair), Professors Annett, Banting, Barr, Basker, Benton, Birdi, Bond, Canagarajah, Carazo Salas, Cristianini, Dymock, Gallagher, Hammond, Heslop, Hutton, Jarrold, Linthorst, Marklof, Nabney, Nix, Nobes, Orpen, Orr-Ewing, Purdy, Robinson, Sandy, Scarpa; Mr M Ammar, Dr M Azarpeyvand, M S Bullock, Dr D Damen, Dr L Dickinson, Dr N Farwell, Dr A Fraser, Ms C Fraser, Dr C Fuller, Ms R Geller, Dr H Heath, Dr I Hers, Dr A James, Mr P Kent, Dr E Lithander, Dr S McGuiness, Mr J Mudie, Dr S Proud, Dr S Quadflieg, Mr S Singh, Dr M Stam, Dr N Timpson, Dr N Wu.

In attendance: Ms L Barling (Clerk), Mr M Ames, Ms C Buchanan, Ms P Coonerry, Ms A O’Grady, Ms L Robinson, Professor J Tavare.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting on 11 December 2017 and the extraordinary meeting on 31 January 2018

1.1 APPROVED: the minutes of the meeting of 11 December 2017.

1.2 APPROVED: the minutes of the extraordinary meeting of 31 January 2018.

2. Chair’s Report
2.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/024).

2.2 The report was introduced by the Chair.

Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS)

2.3 It was important to acknowledge that the future of USS was now the subject of an industrial relations dispute.

2.4 Each member of Senate who was also a member of USS would clearly have an interest in the discussions that might take place at this meeting, and that would be formally noted. As the meeting would likely involve debate on the issues at play, in order to allow the University’s senior management team to hear the views of Senators, the Vice-Chancellor (as Chair of Senate) took the view that those interests did not amount to a conflict of interests.

2.5 The Vice-Chancellor emphasised, with the endorsement of members of Senate, the importance of staff continuing to maintain collegiality and respect with and for both each other and our students during the current industrial dispute. Members noted that no disciplinary action would be taken against staff taking part in the dispute, provided that no misconduct was committed (in the form of, for example, unacceptable behaviour).

Office for Students (OfS)

2.6 It was noted that the Office for Students was formally established on 1 January 2018, and Senate would receive an overview of its new regulatory requirements in due course.
Timetabling

2.7 Members were reminded that discussion of the report on timetabling (paper reference SN/17-18/027) had been postponed. Whilst this was an urgent issue given the unfortunate Fry Building fire it also had important implications for staff. With this in mind, it was felt that the proposals contained within the report would benefit from the views of the full range of Senate membership and, in view of current circumstances (including industrial action taking place that day), an extraordinary meeting of Senate would be convened in due course, to allow such discussion to take place. That meeting would be held on a non-strike day.

Building name change

2.8 Senate APPROVED a request to change the name of the new CIEL Poultry Unit at Langford to ‘The Lindsay Wilkins Building’.

3. Vice-Chancellor’s question time

2017 Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) valuation

3.1 A member of Senate raised a question relating to the position taken by the University in relation to the 2017 Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) valuation, requesting clarification of the University’s position on the terms of the UUK negotiations. The Vice-Chancellor reiterated the importance of UCU and UUK working together to explore whether there could be an alternative solution that was both viable and affordable, however it was clear that not reforming USS at all was not an option. The scheme currently had a £6.1 billion deficit, which must be considered in the context of a significant future increase in the cost of future pensions provision. Pensions law required the increased cost to be addressed, and the Pensions Regulator and USS trustees needed to agree a credible plan to address the deficit by this summer. No reform would result in a significant, and unaffordable, increase in both employer and member contributions as well as significant risk to the sustainability of USS.

Timetabling

3.2 Members of Senate raised a question about the postponed timetabling report (SN/17-18/027) in respect of the extension of the teaching week. The Vice-Chancellor emphasised that the report was being brought to Senate as a result of the Fry Building fire which had put unsustainable pressure on the teaching space available to be timetabled in 18/19 and possibly 19/20. As members were already aware, the University was actively trying to mitigate the impact of the delayed completion of the Fry Building on teaching space, including by organising temporary alternative teaching spaces. Members of Senate noted that, although the immediate priority is evaluation of potential temporary solutions to relieve this pressure, there remained larger issues in respect of amount of and use of teaching space and changes to the teaching week (and other levers at the University’s disposal) that might need to be implemented in order to address that.

4. Written questions

4.1 None had been received. Members of Senate were reminded that they can submit written questions in advance of each meeting, for discussion.

5. Faculty Board recommendations

5.1 None had been received.

6. Education Committee Report*

6.1 RECEIVED (SN/17-18/025).

6.2 The Academic Registrar, Academic Director of Undergraduate Studies and Academic Director of Graduate Studies introduced the paper.
6.3 Senate considered the proposal from the University Education Committee to change the relationship between the Education Committee and Senate. In summary the changes would be:

- Senate to delegate authority to the Committee for the approval of annual and/or routine areas of work (programme approval; new academic year dates are to be approved by UMT following endorsement by URC and UEC; revisions to the Student Agreement; changes to regulations and policy; setting education priorities).
- The Committee to present an annual education-related position paper for Senate, which would enable it to consider education-related issues and policy at an earlier point, adding the most value to decision-making in respect of education matters and identifying education-related risks in a timely way.
- The Committee to be responsible for presenting the detailed annual report/action plan on the continuous improvement of the student academic experience and student outcomes to the Board of Trustees for onward submission to the University’s regulator, within parameters to be agreed by Senate.

6.4 During the discussion, the following was highlighted:

- As Senate delegates more work to its committees, its committees’ Terms of Reference and membership documents should be reviewed regularly.
- It would be important to ensure that the wider academic community was able to provide input into discussion that took place at committees of Senate.
- Important issues such as the setting the University Almanac, for example, should be considered at an earlier stage by the Education committee (see above) than it had been in the recent past, and a balanced discussion should be had, so that the University is not in the position of ‘playing catch-up’.
- The annual position paper that was suggested would be extremely useful in engaging Senate and receiving members’ input at an early stage in the development of the University’s annual education priorities.

6.5 Senate APPROVED the proposal to change the relationship between the University Education Committee and Senate, on the understanding that the change would lead to more intense consideration and more active interrogation of important education-related issues. The changes would be implemented with immediate effect, and the terms of reference of Education Committee should be amended as soon as practicable.

6.6 Senate considered the new policy on Academic Personal Tutoring and associated revised Regulations on Academic Student Support, and the revised policy on Personal Development Planning for 2018/19.

6.7 During the discussion, the following was highlighted:

- The Personal Tutoring policy being considered today was for taught students only. A separate piece of work was currently being undertaken to look at pastoral support for postgraduate research students. This separation was important because the provision of support for both was quite different.
- Although it was noted that the policy was not intended to increase workloads and was more about ensuring consistency of support to students, given the wide remit of the role, it would be essential to ensure that Senior Tutors were provided with support and time in order to be able to undertake their role effectively.
- It would be helpful to clarify the levels of staff (in terms of academic seniority) who would be eligible to take on the role of Senior Tutor, and whether undertaking the role would feed into the promotion criteria.
- The University should be mindful of the diversity of personal tutoring models currently in place across the faculties.
6.8 Senate APPROVED the new Policy on Academic Personal Tutoring, the associated revised Regulations on Academic Student Support, and the revised Policy on Personal Development Planning for 2018/19.

6.9 Senate APPROVED the following recommendations for new programmes/pathways, changes to programmes/pathways and programme withdrawals:
1. A new MSc Migration and Mobility Studies.
2. The withdrawal of the MRes Complexity Sciences.
3. The withdrawal of the September and January pre-sessional courses provided by the Centre for English Language and Foundation Studies.

6.10 Senate NOTED the new programmes, programme withdrawals and suspensions that were approved by Senate Chair’s action in December 2017.

6.11 Senate NOTED the rest of the report.

7. Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus (TQEC)*
7.1 RECEIVED and NOTED: a presentation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (and Chair of the Temple Quarter Programme Board) on the development of the Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus (TQEC) and its role in sustaining the University for the future.

7.2 Senate members made the following comments:
• As the new campus had been designed to be accessed by public transport, walking, or cycling, it would be important to consider the improvement of existing transport links between the Clifton Campus and TQEC at an early stage in the development of the programme.
• It should be recognised that as the University expanded into this new space, staff needs/resources might simultaneously expand. It would therefore be essential for the University to provide appropriately structured support to Schools who were in rapid transition.
• The strengthening of the University’s international links should be considered, particularly in the context of its ambitions as a global civic university.
• The importance of synergy in relation to the goals and aspirations of TQEC should be recognised. Engineering synergy or creative synergy was at the heart of what the University was trying to do, and it was not simply about synergy within the research community but also between teaching, research and engagement. There was also a clear sense that all of the Programme Boards needed to achieve synergy between their endeavours to create intellectual opportunities and a distinctive educational offering.

7.3 A Temple Quarter Programme Brochure would be made available on the website in due course (bristol.ac.uk/templequarter)

7.4 Senate members thanked the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for his helpful presentation.

[The Chair paused the meeting at 1540 and invited James Thompson (UCU Vice President), and two students, Kate Raison and Ruth Day, ] to express their views and concerns relating to the ongoing industrial dispute. On behalf of Senate, the Chair thanked them for expressing their views, after which they left the meeting, and then formal Senate business resumed.

8. Report on 2017/18 timetable & resulting recommendations as a result of the Fry fire*
WITHDRAWN: (SN/17-18/027)
8.1 This paper had been withdrawn (see paragraph reference 3.2 above) and would be discussed at a specially convened meeting on 1 March 2018.

9. **Ordinance Changes: Life Sciences Programme**
9.1 RECEIVED and APPROVED (SN/17-18/028)

9.2 Senate ENDORSED, for approval by the Board of Trustees, the request to change the name of the ‘School of Experimental Psychology’ to the ‘School of Psychological Science’ and CONSENTED TO the proposed amendments to Ordinance 19 as set out in the paper.

10. **Report of the Research Committee**
10.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/029)

11. **IT Committee Report**
11.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/030)

12. **Report of the Board of Trustees**
12.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/031)

13. **Future agenda items**
13.1 Senate was asked for any proposed future items to be passed to the Secretary, or to the Governance Team (governance@bristol.ac.uk).

14. **Equality of Opportunity, including consideration of Equality Related Risks**
14.1 Senate were invited to record any particular issues regarding Equality and Diversity that it has considered today, including items for further discussion. These may include the issues around pensions, timetabling, and personal tutoring.

15. **Communication and Consultation**
15.1 Senate recorded any particular issues regarding communication/consultation that it has considered today. These may include communication around the consultation on the pensions review and the publication of the Temple Quarter Programme brochure.

15.2 Senate members were encouraged to disseminate information from the Meeting to academic colleagues, except where items are marked as confidential or strictly confidential.

16. **Quality Assurance**
16.1 Senate recorded any particular issues regarding Quality Assurance that it has considered today, including items for further discussion. These may include the report of the Education Committee.

17. **Date of next meeting**
17.1 The date of the next specially convened meeting of Senate would be held on 1 March 2018 to discuss timetabling. Following the specially convened meeting, the next formal meeting of Senate was due to take place on Monday 23 April 2018, 1400, in the Reception Room, Wills Memorial Building.

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1 Post meeting note: due to inclement weather, the specially convened meeting of Senate was subsequently re-arranged to Thursday 22 March 2018.

2 Post meeting note: the meeting was later rescheduled to Thursday 22 March 2018, 1400 – 1500, in the Reception Room Wills Memorial Building.